

Luke 12:49-53 ESV



# The Cross of Jesus Divides!

Sunday, August 14 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, August 15 at 7 PM

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2016

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Since the peace between us and God was broken when Adam and Eve fell into sin, the Son of God came to ✦remove our sin and ✦restore that peace! But the cross has also brought division: Some embrace Jesus, *while others reject Him*; some live for Jesus, *while others live for themselves*. So we see divisions within ✦countries, ✦communities, ✦churches, and ✦families. May this sermon help us *understand them and respond to them!*

1. **Why the Son of God came to earth:** <sup>49</sup> **“I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!”**
  - a. **What** is the **“fire”**? The fire is *the offense of the cross*. Anyone who died on a cross was cursed by God (**Deut. 21:23**), so most of the Jews rejected Jesus; *His form of death was offensive to them!*
  - b. **When** did the **“fire”** begin? At first Jesus was embraced and followed, but His death on a cross began the fire of offense. On Palm Sunday the people were united for Jesus, but five days later they shouted: *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!* Once His crucifixion actually took place, the cross of Jesus began to divide all people.
  - c. **Why** did Jesus wish **“it were already kindled”**?

He wanted ♦His pain and suffering to be over  
and ♦us to be saved through His finished work!

2. **What did Jesus' work have to do with baptism?** Jesus said: <sup>50</sup> [And] **I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!** // Think back to Jesus' baptism; He was not baptized for the forgiveness of sins; instead, the water of His baptism symbolized †the sins He would receive, †the suffering He would endure, and †the death He would die! Knowing such things were coming, He was in distress until they were finished!
  
3. **Some results of Jesus' work:** He said: <sup>51</sup> **“Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.** // In Matthew 10:34, Jesus said something similar: **“I have not come to bring peace, but a sword”** (ESV).
  - a. Peace between God and men: When Jesus was born, a great company of angels appeared to certain shepherds and spoke these words of praise to God: **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”**<sup>1</sup> So He came to provide peace to those **“on whom his favor rests.”** Who are such people? Those who trust in Jesus Christ for eternal life! Even now, God invites all people to be at peace with Him through Jesus!
  - b. Division between believers and unbelievers:
    - i. Only *repentant* believers will be in heaven;

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<sup>1</sup> NIV (New International Version) Luke 2:14.

even now such people live in peace with each other. However, in the world, there is a mixture of believers and unbelievers. They are different in their beliefs, priorities, goals, attitudes, etc.; such differences result in division.

- ii. To encourage peace, we could become like the unbelievers; however, in doing so, we would lose our greatest blessings: †His forgiveness, †our peace with God, and †His gift of salvation. Lenski wrote, “It is better that some accept the cross than that all the earth should perish in its sin” (715). Therefore, we ✓ pray and ✓ think and ✓ speak and ✓ act to help others become like us – *the very children of God!*
- c. Division even among family members: <sup>52</sup> **For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three.** <sup>53</sup> **They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”**
  - i. A family of five: Jesus described a small Jewish family living in one house. It consisted of a father, a mother, a son, his wife, and an unmarried daughter. A small family like that, living under one roof, *should have had a good relationship with each other;* nevertheless, because of the

differences that exist between believers and unbelievers, they were divided. But why? Because of a battle between ☺good and evil, ☹true and false, ☺light and darkness. Those who believe want the others to do the same, while those without faith want to stay in their unbelief.

- ii. No one is in a neutral position: From our text we notice that two are against three and three are against two. There is no neutral position; each person is either a believer or an unbeliever. So those who are not for God – *trusting in Him and living for Him* – have only one other position, they are against Him ☹. Let us never ever be against the One who died for us!

**Conclusion:** Let us pray: Dear Jesus, thank You for making a division between *us and our sin* and restoring the relationship between *us and the Father!* Dear Holy Spirit, as we are tempted to compromise the truth – for the sake of peace with unbelievers, move us, instead, to stand firm on the truth, love them, pray for them, and share God’s saving Word with them! And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

### Some ways to reach unbelievers:

1. Share a sermon or brochure with them.
2. Invite them to attend with you.
3. Tell them how knowing Jesus makes all the difference for you!

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